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September 20, 2006

MEMORANDUM

NSLP 2007-16
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To: All NSLP Sponsors
All Staff

From: Pat Cook and Katherine Stewart, RD, CPFM
Office of Child Nutrition and School Health
Nutrition Education Program Consultants

Subject: FDA Consumer Advisory on Refrigeration of Carrot Juice

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is advising consumers of the vital importance of keeping carrot juice, including pasteurized carrot juice, refrigerated. There are three cases of botulism in the state of Georgia associated with pasteurized carrot juice that may have been due to the product not being properly refrigerated.

"Because botulism is such a potentially serious illness, we want to remind consumers that it is critical to refrigerate carrot juice for safety. Consumers should not keep carrot juice unrefrigerated," said Dr. Robert Brackett, Director of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN). Inadequate refrigeration of carrot juice allows botulinum spores to multiply to the level at which they can cause illness.

Botulism is a rare but serious paralytic illness caused by botulinum toxin, a nerve poison that under certain conditions is produced by *Clostridium botulinum*, a bacterium commonly found in soil. Botulism can be fatal and is considered a medical emergency. Foodborne botulism is not common in the United States; on average, 24 cases of botulism are reported each year.

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Botulinum poisoning can result in the following symptoms: double-vision, droopy eyelids and altered voice or trouble with speaking or swallowing, and paralysis on both sides of the body that progresses from the neck down, possibly followed by difficulty in breathing. People experiencing these problems should seek immediate medical attention.

Adequate refrigeration is one of the keys to food safety. Cold temperatures keep most harmful pathogens from growing and multiplying. Refrigerator temperatures should be no higher than 40°F and freezers no higher than 0°F. Consumers should check the temperatures occasionally with an appliance thermometer.

Consumers should look for the words "Keep Refrigerated" or "Refrigerate after Opening" on juice labels to know whether the product should be refrigerated. FDA is looking into whether the industry is providing clear labeling on refrigeration of juice products during storage.

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